

Gendered structures in academic entrepreneurship and innovation - A development towards world-class standard in educational programmes in Sweden

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An integration of activities such as incubators, technology transfer, student and alumni organisations etc related to entrepreneurship education is seen as promoting economic development and innovativeness in many parts of the world. This way of creating systems for entrepreneurship development has also recently been focused in Sweden. As a result of Swedish Government's ambition to stimulate growth economy, university entrepreneurship education program spring up all over the country in order to promote students' entrepreneurship.

From previous research we know that the infrastructure has an impact for entrepreneurship (Delatte & Baytos, 1993; Hannon, 2003; Rosa & Dawson, 2006, Xu, 2010). The structure relates to the number of individuals in the management structure and the role the individual has in the management structure such as member of the board or manager. It also refers to characteristics of the individuals involved in the management such as diversity, gender, age, education competence and previous experience (Rosa & Dawson, 2006). Further, it has been shown that managers are important since a lack of role models have been shown to have an impact for both female entrepreneurs and female managers in decisions of starting and/or managing a business (Crampton & Mishra, 1999; Mattis, 2004). However, public and private initiatives aimed to support business development usually are following a gender blind norm both in the way it is presented, for example regarding language and psychological accessibility, and considering the fields pointed out. Research shows that women don't feel themselves addressed by these initiatives or that it concerns them (NUTEK, 2001; NUTEK, R 2007:34).

Swedish Government recently challenged to higher education institutions to apply for finance to a development towards world-class standard in educational programmes in entrepreneurship and innovation (Prop. 2008/2009:1/16). The invitation was directed to higher education institutions that already run advanced studies in entrepreneurship and innovation and that also have a strong connection to research in the same area. Swedish National Agency for Higher Education was commissioned by the Government to examine the applications and invited a panel of international academic experts to assess the applications. Eleven applications were submitted from higher education institutions in the field of entrepreneurship and innovation. Four of the eleven institutions which applied were recommended by the panel of experts and these institutions were further ranked and recommended by Swedish National Agency for Higher Education to the University Chancellor. Two of these institutions were finally selected to be financed by the Swedish Government.

This paper focuses on these eleven applications and the review process. The aim of the paper is to analyze and illustrate in what way the applications as well as the review process is gendered for example in terms of discourse and symbols in relation to educational setting, organizational structure, infrastructure, education management, education team assigned and branches of industry (Acker, 1992; Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, 2005; Gunnarsson, Westberg, Andersson & Balkmar, 2007). We expect to find how gender is mirrored in these highly ranked applications and what impact the presence or absence of a gender focus will have for entrepreneurship and innovation education.

Keywords; Gender, entrepreneurship, innovation, academic education